**Chancellor says she hopes as many Germans would join her at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate on September 14 for the rally.** (September 6, 2014)



Angela Merkel. (photo credit:REUTERS)

BERLIN - Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Saturday she would do everything she could to fight anti-Semitism in Germany, amid reports of attacks and a spike in anti-Israel sentiment since the Gaza conflict.  
  
In her weekly podcast, Merkel said she was alarmed that Jewish institutions in Germany still needed police protection and called for a big turnout at a rally against anti-Semitism that she was planning to address in Berlin next weekend.  
  
Authorities and media in Germany, ultra-sensitive about anti-Semitism because of the Holocaust, have criticized chants against Israel and Jews during rallies against Israel's conflict with Hamas in the Gaza Strip.  
  
In July, petrol bombs were thrown at a synagogue in the western town of Wuppertal and a man wearing a skullcap was beaten up on a street corner in Berlin.  
  
"I will personally do everything I can - as will my entire government - to ensure that anti-Semitism doesn't have a chance in our country," said Merkel, without referring to specific incidents or mentioning any new policies.  
  
She said there had been a revival of Jewish culture in the country since World War Two. "We're proud and pleased that it was possible for that to grow in recent years."  
  
There were more than half a million Jews in Germany when the Nazis took power in 1933. That number fell to about 30,000 after the mass killings and emigrations, but the population has since grown to about 200,000.  
  
Merkel said she hoped as many Germans would join her at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate on September 14 for the rally organized by the Central Council of Jews in Germany.  
  
"Hopefully there will be as many people as possible there to show that everyone who lives here will be protected," Merkel said.  
  
"We've got a lot of work ahead of us," Merkel added. "We can see that there is not a single Jewish institution here (in Germany) that doesn't have to have police protection ... That's something that very much concerns me."  
  
Jewish schools, shops, buildings and synagogues are regularly guarded by armed police.  
  
German anti-racist laws forbid incitement to racial hatred such as anti-Semitic slogans, and outlaw propagation of the racist beliefs of the Nazis, whose emblems are also illegal.

August 27,2014

**Germany steps up fight against far rightists after neo-Nazi murders**



ERLIN - Germany has drafted legislation to help prevent a repeat of a racist murder spree by a neo-Nazi cell between the years 2000 and 2007, giving a bigger role to federal prosecutors and allowing courts to focus more on xenophobic motives.

The killings shocked Germany after going undetected for more than a decade and coming to light only by chance in late 2011. The discovery led to massive criticism of the country's intelligence services for incompetence.

The draft law, approved by Chancellor Angela Merkel's cabinet on Wednesday, will implement recommendations made by a parliamentary panel after the murders of eight Turks, a Greek and a policewoman in Germany between 2000 and 2007.

One of the main problems with the original investigations into the killings was that the authorities failed to view them as racist crimes. As a result, courts will in future be asked to pay more attention to racist and xenophobic motives when it comes to punishments, according to the government.

And in response to findings that police and justice officials in Germany's 16 states failed to link the murders, the new law will make it easier for the federal prosecutor to get involved earlier in ongoing investigations.

"Overall it will become easier to justify the responsibility of the federal prosecutor," the government said in a statement.

In a Munich court, 39-year old Beate Zschaepe is on trial for being a member of the National Socialist Underground (NSU) cell and of complicity in the murders. The other two, male, members of the cell, were found dead in 2011.

Last week, a parliamentary report in the eastern state of Thuringia labelled the police investigation there a "fiasco" that verged on deliberate sabotage.

## "During the weeks before my mother died she commanded me: ‘Leah you must live! You must remember! You must tell the world!’" says educator and author Leah Kaufman.



Holocaust survivor Leah Kaufman 370. (photo credit:Daniel K. Eisenbud) August 14, 2013

Leah Kaufman, an orphaned child Holocaust survivor who went on to become a noted educator and author, riveted an audience of adult Jewish studies students Tuesday afternoon with stories of a past defined by inhumanity and loss, which resulted in her strengthened Jewish identity.  
  
The lecture, held at the Jewel School – a Jewish learning program for women between the ages of 19 and 30, located in Ramat Eshkol – was attended by over a dozen students, many of whom alternately wept or wiped away tears during Kaufman’s tragic, yet uplifting, retelling.  
  
Kaufman, who was born in Romania and subsequently made aliya from Calgary in 1999, is the co-author of Live! Remember! Tell the World! The Story of a Hidden Child Survivor of Transnistria, which details her dystopian childhood as a young Romanian orphan during the Shoah.  
  
“For 52 years I didn’t talk about my experience,” said Kaufman. “I didn’t know much about the Holocaust – I knew about my Holocaust. But there are no words to tell what terrible things human beings are capable of doing.”  
  
Indeed, Kaufman was nine years old when Romanian Jews in her community were forced on a death march to Transnistria – located between the Dniester River and the eastern Moldovan border with Ukraine – during the depths of winter.  
  
“We were thrown out of Romania in the most inhumane possible way,” said the retired teacher, who taught Yiddish and Hebrew after earning an MA in Canada years after the war. “The night we fled was the last time I was with my family as a child.”  
  
The daughter of a merchant and a midwife who also studied alternative medicine, Kaufman said she had an idyllic childhood in Romania before the war. However, she noted that she was only nine years old and in the third grade at a Jewish day school, “when hell came on me.”  
  
“I saw the Nazis rape young girls in front of their parents and family and throw them away like garbage,” she recounted. “If you were a baby born to a Jew, Hitler wanted you uprooted from the earth.  
  
“It was a miracle that he was stopped,” she continued.  
  
The youngest of seven children, Kaufman said she was unable to speak of the trauma of her childhood for decades, until 1995, when she said the claims made by Holocaust revisionists and deniers compelled her to come forward.  
  
“When they came out and said it never happened, I had to speak,” she said. “I had no other choice.”  
  
“Those who died or were killed were the lucky ones,” she said. “Believe me, it was the easiest thing to die. To live was difficult.”  
  
Still, Kaufman said survival became paramount to her so she could one day tell her story to a once apathetic world.  
  
“We had to live and sanctify God’s name and tell them what happened,” she explained.  
  
During the death march to Transnistria, Kaufman recounted seeing all the students of an area yeshiva, naked, outside the school, forced to dig their own graves by Nazis during the frigid winter.  
  
“The Nazis asked one of them to say a prayer before they killed them, and the instructor said, ‘I thank God we are not killers like you,’” she recounted. “They were then shot dead into the graves and [the Nazis] did not even bother to bury them.”  
  
Shortly after witnessing the massacre, Kaufman found her mother dead, lying naked on the floor of the room they were imprisoned in Transnistria.  
  
Kaufman said she sold her remaining possessions to buy a blanket to cover her mother’s corpse.  
  
“During the weeks before she died, my mother commanded: ‘Leah you must live!’” she said. “You must remember! You must tell the world!’” These words became the name of her autobiography, written with Sheina Medwed in 2005.  
  
Indeed, despite contracting malaria and being surrounded by death and disease, Kaufman survived and was liberated in 1944, only to be placed in an orphanage.  
  
“It had no windows or doors and children there died by the thousands of tuberculosis – all the world was a hell,” she said.  
  
“We sang the hatikva and told each other that if we survived we must tell the world what happened to us.”  
  
Kaufman was subsequently forced to live as a Christian for a year for her safety, before being moved to an Austrian displaced persons camp.  
  
A gifted linguist, she adeptly learned multiple languages, including Yiddish and Hebrew, which she went on to teach in Canada for over 50 years.  
  
Kaufman married and had three sons who she raised to become Orthodox. Today she has 22 grandchildren and eight great-grand children.  
  
“I want to show you my revenge,” she said as her lecture came to an end.  
  
Kaufman then took a photo album of her family from a bag and proudly displayed pictures of each of her family members. “This is my revenge,” she said.  
  
“Now I’m one of the last of the survivors to go around and talk to [students] to tell them what happened,” she added.  
  
Following the lecture, several students expressed admiration and respect for Kaufman’s legacy.  
  
“After the Holocaust the survivors in my family moved away from Judaism, and hearing Leah talk made me feel a sense of purpose to be observant,” said Jenifer Bound.  
  
Rebecca Moghaden said Kaufman’s words helped her reconnect to her Jewish past.  
  
“[Her speech] connected me to the roots of my heritage and added significance to understanding where I come from,” she said. “Hearing what she’s gone through truly gave me a sense of what went on.”  
  
Shayna Lurya described Kaufman’s embracing of her Jewish past, despite her profound hardships, as “inspirational.”  
  
“She gave me a really unique perspective – and everything she did to hold onto her Judaism saved her,” Lurya said. “The heart of Judaism is learning, and she inspired us today.”  
  
Asked by one of the students why she eventually made aliya, Kaufman had a ready response: “Because this is my home.”